

# SHADES OF GRAY



VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2

Summer 2006



Celebrating 25 Years of Protecting An American Ocean Treasure

## Happy Birthday to Gray's Reef from Thunderbolt Elementary Students

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary staff celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its designation as a sanctuary on January 26<sup>th</sup> with the teachers and first graders of Thunderbolt Elementary Marine Science Academy.



NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARIES™

GRAY'S REEF  
1981 ★ 2006

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

World," a multi-volume encyclopedia of marine life, for the school's media center. "These volumes will greatly enhance the students' understanding of the marine world," said Patricia Priestly, marine science coordinator at the school.

Gray's Reef is forging a partnership with the school to enrich marine science education for Thunderbolt's 650 students. To kick off the partnership, Gray's Reef presented three framed educational posters to the Thunderbolt Elementary media center. Each classroom at Thunderbolt also received a set of educational posters from the sanctuary. Gray's Reef has also purchased "Aquatic Life of the

Thunderbolt Marine Science Academy is the only marine science magnet school in the Chatham-Savannah School District.

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Thunderbolt first graders sing about fish and alligators at the Gray's Reef birthday party. Gray's Reef donated educational material to Thunderbolt in honor of its 25<sup>th</sup> year as a National Marine Sanctuary.



Charlea Nelson uses the Aquatic Life books donated to Thunderbolt by Gray's Reef.

## Lights, Camera, Oceans!

Gray's Reef Prepares  
Third Ocean Film Festival  
for September  
22, 23, 24 and 30

It's not too early to mark your calendar for the third Ocean Film Festival scheduled to take place Sept. 22-24 at Trustees Theater in downtown Savannah and September 30 at the Ritz Theater in downtown Brunswick.

The Ocean Film Festival has been expanded this year to celebrate both the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gray's Reef and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sapelo Island Estuarine Research Reserve. Both agencies are part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The tentative line up for the Ocean Film Festival includes more than 40 films. World renowned whale researcher Roger Payne, legendary diver and underwater cinematographer Stan Waterman and National Geographic documentary filmmaker Kevin McCarey are among the ocean filmmakers who will be presenting. The Academy Award winning film, "Darwin's Nightmare," is also scheduled to be shown.

Look for a complete schedule of films on the Gray's Reef web site soon.  
[www.graysreef.noaa.gov](http://www.graysreef.noaa.gov)



## SHADES OF GRAY

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Acting Sanctuary Managers  
**Greg McFall**  
**Cathy Sakas**

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WE WELCOME COMMENTS AND WILL CONSIDER PUBLICATION OF ITEMS SUBMITTED BY READERS AS SPACE PERMITS.

Comments and articles should be sent to:  
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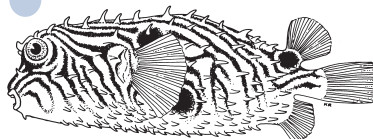
The Thunderbolt first graders entertained at the anniversary party with "fishy" music, songs and dance. The Gray's Reef staff served birthday cake to the first graders.

Gray's Reef staff will also be on hand for Thunderbolt's Big Splash Day—a day of hands-on marine science education to be held before the end of the school year.



Becky Shortland, Planning Coordinator, Greg McFall, Acting Sanctuary Manager and Cathy Sakas, Acting Sanctuary Manager, (left to right) celebrate Gray's Reef's birthday with Thunderbolt Elementary principal Dr. Vicki Bryant.

For more information about the Thunderbolt Elementary Academy, call Pat Priestly at (912) 303-6655 or see <http://www.savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us/schools/thunderbolt/sccps.html>



## From the Sanctuary Managers

Our summer season is upon on us and that means our research cruises are already in progress aboard the NOAA Ship *Nancy Foster*. Greg McFall is coordinating the cruises and serving as chief scientist and dive operations supervisor. He is definitely a busy man. In mid-June, our educator workshops with our partner the Georgia Aquarium kick into high gear. That means that Cathy will be very busy leading 32 educators along with my colleague at the Georgia Aquarium down the Altamaha River Watershed from Atlanta to Gray's Reef for two weeks. The rest of the staff has their hands full with Ocean Film Festival preparations, editing our website, preparing for our big September anniversary event in Atlanta, and much more.

Speaking of our anniversary, this year marks our 25<sup>th</sup> year as a sanctuary and we will be celebrating in a variety of ways. Our big event will take place on September 7<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta at the Georgia Aquarium. At this event we will honor Bernie Marcus, the benefactor of the Georgia Aquarium, for his generous contribution to the state of Georgia and the world in ocean awareness. Marcus is the co-founder of Home Depot, and he and his wife Billie generously gave millions of their own money to make the Aquarium a reality. It is the largest in the world and is quite impressive indeed. If you would like an invitation to this fund-raising event, let us know soon where to send the invitation.

Later this summer our new management plan is due to hit the streets, so be on the look out for it. You can find out all about our current and new proposed regulations as well as our research programs, education and outreach programs and much more on our web site at [www.graysreef.noaa.gov](http://www.graysreef.noaa.gov).

So dive into our web site or better yet on the reef itself. If you happen to be on Skidaway Island drop by our headquarters for a visit.

Have a wonderful summer!

**Cathy and Greg**



## Entertainment With A Mission

### Cousteau Film Crew Brings Gray's Reef, Other Sanctuaries to Public Television

Underwater footage of Gray's Reef will go national this fall thanks to a dive and film team led by undersea explorer Fabien Cousteau.



Fabien Cousteau *Ocean Futures Society*

Fabien, grandson of famed oceanographer Jacques Yves Cousteau, has spent the last nine months documenting all 13 marine sanctuaries in the United States for his father's PBS series "Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures." The team spent a few days in March at Gray's Reef—the only sanctuary they visited three times.

Footage from Gray's Reef and each of the sanctuaries will be featured in a two-part episode called "America's Underwater Treasures." The episode will be narrated by actor Robert Redford and is scheduled to air on PBS in the fall. Another episode of the multi-part, high definition television series, "Voyage to Kure" aired in April. That episode explored the

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands archipelago, the most remote island group in the world. The area is on its way to becoming the nation's 14<sup>th</sup> national marine sanctuary.

A visit from a film crew of this caliber provides an opportunity for many people to see a reef that we already know is an important piece of habitat. The Gray's Reef staff was very excited to host the team.

The crew used the Gray's Reef research vessel *Joe Ferguson* for three days of diving and filming. At the end of the mission, Fabien Cousteau ticked off a list of ocean life they encountered in just the final dive: an array of angelfish, arrow crabs, and sheephead. They also spotted a number of scour holes used by threatened loggerhead turtles to scrape barnacles off their shells.

"We also swam through a school of jellyfish, which was pretty fantastic," he said.

Fabien Cousteau said the purpose of the program is to showcase the beauty of each of the 13 underwater ecosystems, while at the same time sounding the call to preserve them.

"People may not even know they have these marine parks for their own enjoyment," he said. "But it's a finite resource. Humans impact the oceans every day. If the series can bring these two themes together, then it's done its job."

"Ocean Adventures" harkens back to Jacques Yves Cousteau's effort of 30 years ago when he first introduced television audiences to the world's



Fabien Cousteau, with a custom-made scuba tank, boards the *Joe Ferguson* after a dive.

marine environment. Now, the next two generations of Cousteaus are taking television audience on a new adventure using cutting-edge technology to bring the deep sea to life. Through Jean-Michel's and his team's observations, the series will illuminate the great need for better understanding and sustainable management of the oceans' rich natural treasures.

To learn more about  
"Jean-Michel Cousteau:  
Ocean Adventures,"  
check the  
Ocean Futures website  
at:  
<http://www.oceanfutures.org/>





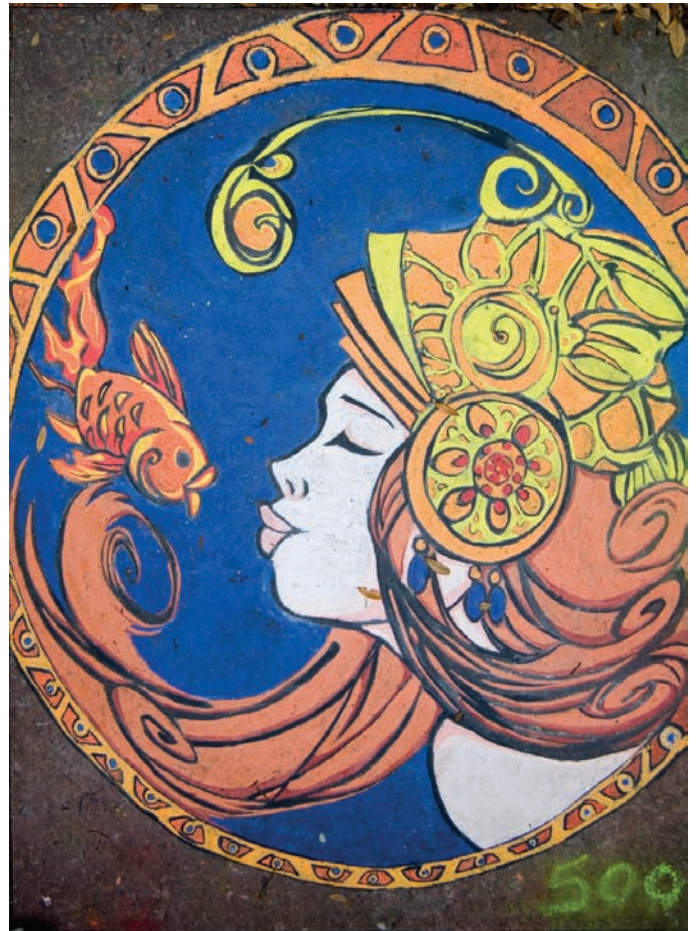
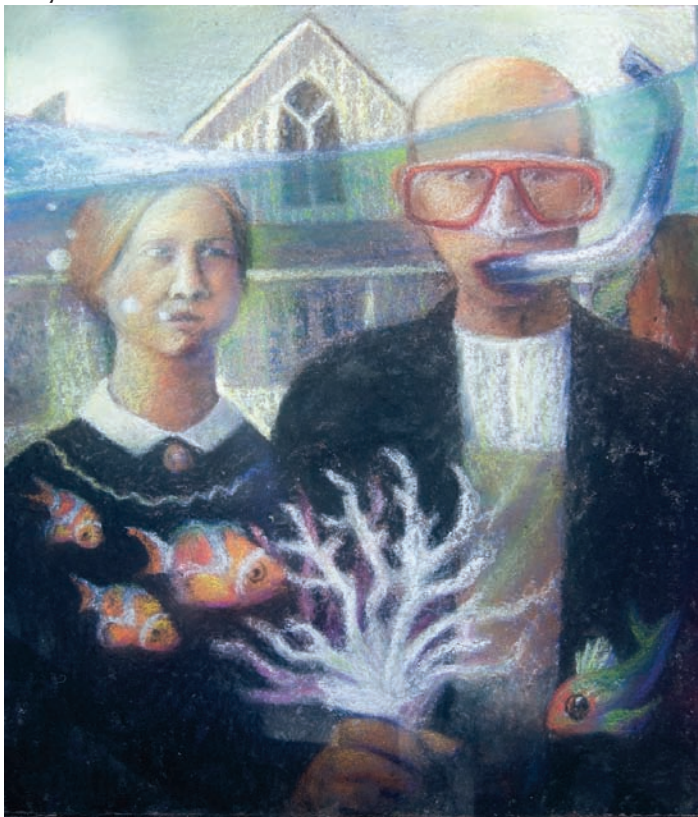
## Art for Ocean's Sake

Fantastic Fishes Art Contest Winners  
Draw Attention to the Seas

The winners of the Gray's Reef Fantastic Fishes art contest, part of the Savannah College of Arts and Design's Sidewalk Arts Festival, are Amy Hahn, the team of Candice Ciefla and Nathan Englehardt, and the team of Amanda Coronado and Sarah Zelepsky.

Each year, hundreds of students, alumni and prospective students of the famous Savannah College of Art and Design create chalk drawings on the sidewalks around historic Forsyth Park during the one-day festival. The colorful event draws thousands of visitors to the park to view the ephemeral masterpieces. The Gray's Reef Fantastic Fishes Award honored the most imaginative chalk interpretations of the marine environment.

Amy Hahn

Amanda Coronado and  
Sarah ZelepskyCandice Ciefla and  
Nathan Englehardt



## ROVing the Sanctuaries

### Green Is The Color of Success

**F**rog Box III, a bright green collection of PVC pipe and small motors, propelled three Brunswick, Ga., area students toward the national Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) competition to be held June 23-25 at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

Students Afton Elkhom, Crystal Ivey and Harrison Merritt and their physics teacher/coach Jamie Akin, all of Brunswick High School, won the first Southeastern Region ROV competition by manipulating Frog Box through a series of obstacles in a Savannah community pool on Earth Day. The regional contest was sponsored by Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

Five teams of high school students entered the regional competition to build their own ROVs out of PVC pipe and small motors. The contest allowed students to learn important skills used by scientists to study the world's oceans.

"Remotely operated vehicles are a vital part of our scientific tool box at Gray's Reef and other sanctuaries that scientists use to study under-sea habitat and marine life through observation and photography," said Cathy Sakas, acting manager and education coordinator for Gray's Reef sanctuary.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which oversees the sanctuary, places a strong emphasis on

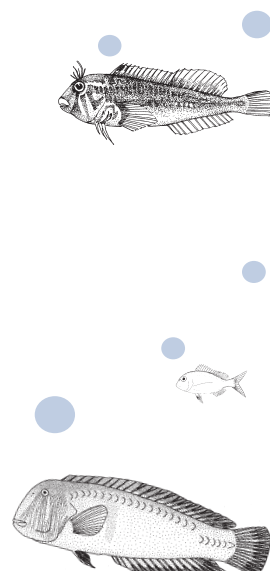
training tomorrow's leaders in science and technology. "The students in this competition may grow up to be the next Jacques Yves Cousteau, Bill Gates or NOAA scientist. It's important that we foster students' sense of discovery," Sakas said.

In preparation for the ROV competition earlier this year, Gray's Reef staff conducted a teacher workshop at the Georgia Aquarium and sponsored a ROV building workshop for 27 Savannah area high school students.

The national ROV competition is sponsored by the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center. MATE will support the Brunswick team with a \$1,000 scholarship to help them make their



Afton Elkhom, Crystal Ivey and Harrison Merritt with Frog Box III



NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

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## About Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

**N**OAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary was established in 1981 to protect one of the largest nearshore livebottom reefs off the southeastern United States. The sanctuary is located about 17 miles east of Sapelo Island, Ga., and encompasses 17 square nautical miles.

The sanctuary is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

An estimated 160 species of fish have been recorded at Gray's Reef; approximately 33 species spawn there. The ledges and overhangs of the reef serve as resting and foraging areas for threatened loggerhead sea turtles, which nest on nearby barrier islands. Gray's Reef is near the critical habitat area and only known calving ground for the highly endangered North Atlantic right whale. Pelagic sea birds and shore birds feed on schooling baitfish within sanctuary waters. The sanctuary is

well known to the recreational divers and fishers who visit it.

The mission of the National Marine Sanctuary Program is to serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas to conserve, protect and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy.

For more information,  
contact NOAA's Gray's  
Reef National Marine Sanctuary  
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10 Ocean Science Circle,  
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Visit us at [www.graysreef.noaa.gov](http://www.graysreef.noaa.gov)

